



Security Council

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**Letter dated 14 August 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Permanent Mission of the Congo to the United Nations
addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to inform you that, during the Presidency of the Republic of the Congo, the Security Council is scheduled to hold an open debate on the subject: "Maintenance of international peace and security: role of the Security Council in conflict prevention and resolution, in particular in Africa".

The Republic of the Congo has prepared a concept paper to help guide the discussion on that occasion (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Pascal Gayama**
Deputy Permanent Representative
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



Annex to the letter dated 14 August 2007 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English/French]

Open debate of the Security Council on conflict prevention and resolution, particularly in Africa

Terms of reference

On 28 August 2007, the Security Council will hold an open debate to consider how to enhance the effectiveness of the role of the Security Council in conflict prevention and resolution, particularly in Africa.

I. Context and objectives

1.1 The Security Council, in its resolution 1625 (2005), expressed its determination to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations in preventing armed conflicts and to monitor closely situations of potential armed conflict.

1.2 In the same resolution, it stressed the importance of establishing effective comprehensive strategies of conflict prevention, focused on averting negative developments in the security, economic, social and humanitarian sectors and in the field of governance and human rights in countries which are facing crises. To that end, resolution 1625 (2005) requested the Secretary-General "to assist countries at risk of armed conflict in performing strategic conflict risk assessments, in implementing the measures agreed by the concerned countries, in enhancing national dispute management capacities, and in addressing the root causes of armed conflict".

1.3 During its Presidency, the Congolese delegation wishes to launch a debate on enhancing the Organization's capacity in conflict prevention, particularly in Africa. This debate is intended to promote a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention and resolution that will take advantage of existing international, regional or subregional mechanisms and will strengthen coherence in the actions of all actors in the field of conflict prevention.

1.4 The Secretary-General, in his report (A/60/891) urges comprehensive action which includes three approaches:

(a) structural prevention to address sources of conflict while preventing crises from breaking out or recurring;

(b) operational prevention that, in the case of immediate crisis, makes use of early warning, good offices, response to humanitarian needs, protection of civilians and sanctions;

(c) systematic prevention, a new approach intended to minimize the risk of conflict escalation.

1.5 Several thematic debates recently begun by the Security Council have helped to enrich the discussion, both through the innovative nature of the topics addressed

and the relevance of the observations made. Since the beginning of 2007, the Security Council has held a series of meetings that shed new light on the causes of conflicts and the new challenges the world must face in the area of peace and security. Noteworthy among these meetings are:

- The open debate on threats to international peace and security on 8 January 2007 (S/PRST/2007/1);
- The open debate on security sector reform on 20 February 2007 (S/PRST/2007/3);
- The open debate on security, energy resources and climate change on 17 April 2007;
- The open debate on the relationship between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, in the maintenance of international peace and security on 28 March 2007 (S/PRST/2007/7);
- The open debate on natural resources and conflict on 25 June 2007 (S/PRST/2007/22).

1.6 On the subject of cooperation with regional organizations, in particular the African Union, the United Nations Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union adopted on 16 June 2007 a joint communiqué which called for strengthening of relations between the two bodies, particularly on conflict prevention, management and resolution, as well as in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, including post-conflict reconstruction and development, as well as sharing of information on conflict situations.

1.7 The African Union Summit Meeting held from 22 to 30 January 2007 in Addis Ababa recalled that the maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council and called on the United Nations to examine, within the context of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, the possibility of funding, through assessed contributions, peacekeeping operations undertaken by the African Union or under its authority and with the consent of the United Nations.

1.8 In the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the Heads of State and Government encouraged and supported the initiatives being taken by the African Union and African subregional organizations to prevent, mediate or resolve conflicts, with the assistance of the United Nations.

II. Justifications

2.1 Too often the Security Council has stressed reaction to conflict rather than prevention. The persistence of conflicts on the Council's agenda and their recurrence calls for innovative initiatives to find solutions better suited to current circumstances. A comprehensive approach therefore appears necessary if a long-term resolution is to be found for grave crises affecting the stability of certain parts of the world, particularly Africa. This necessitates coherence among national, regional and international policies and mechanisms.

2.2 In 2006, United Nations expenditures over the previous five years for peacekeeping operations were calculated at \$18 billion. Likewise, international

organizations, non-governmental organizations and various associations devote significant financial resources to reducing tensions, social crises and various evils caused by armed conflict, while a policy of prevention would allow substantial savings.

2.3 Recently the Security Council has been promoting the development of such new bodies as the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. However, mobilization of social actors and the ability to meet the expectations of all stakeholders remains limited and would gain from encouragement in order to capitalize on their contributions to the areas of peace and stability.

2.4 It is also true that the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly are making great efforts to promote the Millennium Development Goals. Greater coherence and complementarity of actions between those bodies and the Security Council are more necessary than ever in determining the root causes of conflicts, if the desired progress is to be made within the time limits for the implementation of those Goals.

2.5 The African Union is acting with increasing frequency on behalf of the international community, the United Nations in particular, in many conflict situations in Africa. Its capacity to take effective action in peacekeeping and peacebuilding is limited by the lack of financial, material and human resources.

III. Points for discussion

3.1 How does the Security Council envisage implementation and follow-up of conflict prevention and resolution efforts? The following points could be considered:

(a) The role of the Security Council in the area of institutionalization of conflict prevention in the United Nations system: the United Nations Secretariat, in close collaboration with regional organizations, should be prepared to advise on crucial issues (governance, wealth-sharing, economic arrangements, security and transitional justice arrangements) and should have the operational mechanisms required. In that context, the potential role of the Mediation Support Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, should be determined;

(b) Cooperation among the main bodies of the United Nations, in particular:

(i) The proposal made by the President of the Economic and Social Council in the open debate on natural resources and conflict to establish a forum between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council on that issue;

(ii) The proposal of the Secretary-General (A/60/891, para. 95) to transform the Group of Friends on conflict prevention into a formal forum;

(c) The operational modalities of cooperation between the Secretariat and the African Union Commission on issues that affect peace and security in Africa as well as the exchange of experience;

(d) The global and comprehensive strategic vision that must underlie the action of the United Nations in this area.

3.2 How to ensure that the regional organizations, including the African Union, which act on behalf of the international community, especially the United Nations, receive sustainable and predictable financing for the peacekeeping operations that they undertake?

3.3 In the context of the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, how can the coherence and functionality of the existing regional and subregional African mechanisms be guaranteed:

(a) The Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, whose instruments must be activated as follows:

- (i) The protocol on non-aggression and mutual defence;
- (ii) The protocol on judicial cooperation;
- (iii) The protocol on combating the illegal exploitation of natural resources;
- (iv) The protocol on the restoration of democracy and good governance;

(b) The Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX), an organ of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), established in 1999 under the auspices of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa and which has the following instruments:

- Non-Aggression Pact signed in 1996;
- Mutual Assistance Pact;
- Early warning mechanism for Central Africa;
- Central African Multinational Force;

(c) Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (based in Yaoundé, Cameroon);

(d) United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, which has a key role in such sectors as:

- Programmes for cross-border security in the field of small arms control;
- Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes;
- Coordination of some joint activities of a number of subregional or international organizations;

(e) The United Nations Office for West Africa;

(f) The Memorandum of Understanding signed in Addis Ababa on 16 November 2006 between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the President of the African Union Commission (A/61/630, annex).

IV. Expected result

- Adoption of a statement by the President of the Security Council.